

Voices for Victims: A Statewide Blueprint for Action

The Governor's Office of Crime Control & Prevention (GOCCP) is a centralized resource for victim resources and grant funding, and will continue to address crime victims' needs. Under the authority of Governor O'Malley, GOCCP held a series of four Town Hall meetings in late 2010 to provide a "Voice for Crime Victims." Victims of crime, their loved ones, and advocates spoke frankly about their experiences with the criminal justice system to a panel of government officials. The purpose of the sessions was for State representatives to listen and gather information regarding services that Maryland provides for victims of crime as they attempt to recover from physical, emotional, and financial hardships. Crime victims, family members, and service provider representatives testified regarding positive and negative experiences with the criminal justice process.

Crime Victims' Blueprint Workgroup

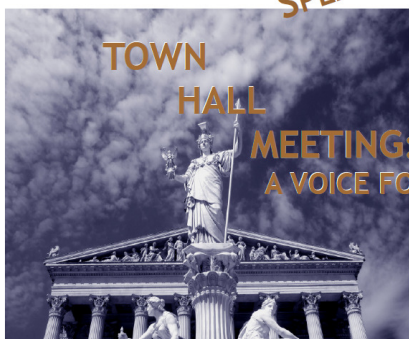
After the 2010 Town Hall Meetings, GOCCP researched the highlighted issues. Then, in May 2011, GOCCP convened a *Crime Victims' Blueprint Workgroup* of 55 Town Hall participants, service providers, judicial officials, attorneys, law enforcement, educators, and health care professionals to dialogue on highlighted issues that were voiced by crime victims. Feedback from this group, combined with deeper research, culminated in recommendations in the categories of legislation, policy, training, technology, community outreach, and public awareness. These were then drafted into a report, *Voices for Victims: A Statewide Blueprint for Action*.

Blueprint

The *Statewide Blueprint for Action* includes testimony indicating the need for greater assistance with domestic violence, stalking/cyber stalking, sexual assault, sex offenders, human trafficking, homicide, drunk driving, and restitution. The *Blueprint* then makes recommendations for improving crime victims' experiences within the criminal justice system. This is a dynamic and evolving report that serves as a resource regarding Maryland's laws and services to address the needs of crime victims. As a next step, GOCCP will discuss the topics revealed at Town Halls with experts in the field and combine implementation and reform efforts with various agencies throughout the State. This continued effort will involve the Governor's Office of Crime Control & Prevention and partnering agencies throughout the State.

HAVE YOU OR SOMEONE YOU LOVE
BEEN A VICTIM OF A CRIME?

SPEAK UP!



**TOWN
HALL
MEETING:
A VOICE FOR CRIME VICTIMS**

Victim - a person who suffers actual or threatened, physical, emotional or financial harm as a direct result of a crime or delinquent act.
MD ANN CODE, Criminal Procedure Article, §11-104 (a) (2)

Participating Stakeholders:

- *Town Hall Participants*
- *Service Providers*
- *Judicial Officials*
- *Attorneys*
- *Law Enforcement*
- *Educators*
- *Health Care Professionals*

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Moving Forward...

The next step at GOCCP involves discussing the various topics with experts in the field (e.g., individuals who attended the workgroup session) and combining efforts with various agencies throughout the State.

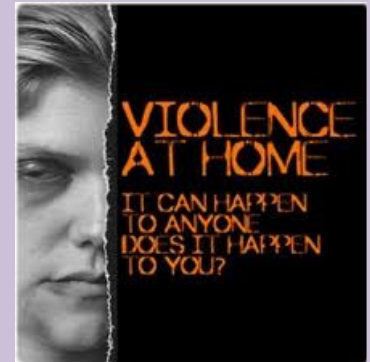
Emphasis will be placed on future implementation of specific legislation, training, policy, technology, and public awareness and community outreach. Matrices have been created to address the testimonies made at the Town Hall Meetings. Each Matrix will categorize various topics according to the future implementation goals (i.e., legislation, training, policy, technology, and public awareness and community outreach) to be later addressed in greater detail by partnering agencies within the State of Maryland.

Training Matrix Example:

PROBLEM	Who Needs Training?					
	Law Enforcement	Judges	Commissioners	Prosecutor	Medical Personnel	First Responder
Violations of Protective Orders are Not Enforced	X	X	X			
Domestic Abusers May Become Dangerous on Pre-Trial Release		X		X		
Abuse Continues Due to the Lack of Real Time Monitoring						
Batterers Are Often Able to get Joint or Sole Custody of Children		X				
Protection Is Needed During Child Drop-Off Exchanges						
Insufficient Protection for Victims of Cyber Crime	X	X	X	X		
The Criminal Justice System Does Not Believe Child Victims	X	X	X	X		X
Child Victims are Required to Testify About Their Victimization		X		X		
Inadequate or Insensitive Responses Made to Victims	X	X	X		X	X
There is a Lack of Communication About Registered Sex Offenders						
Not Enough is Done to Investigate and Arrest Human Traffickers	X			X		X
The Assets of Homicide Victims are Not Protected						
First Degree Murder Offenders are Given the Possibility of Parole		X	X	X		
Vehicular Homicide can be Charged as a Misdemeanor	X					
Victims Are Not Receiving Court-Ordered Restitution		X		X		

Various Topics Include:

- Domestic Violence
- Stalking/Cyber Stalking
- Sexual Assault
- Sex Offenders
- Human Trafficking
- Homicide
- Drunk Driving
- Restitution



Additional Resources:
www.goccp.maryland.gov